

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for protection switching of transmission devices, comprising:

at least two switching devices which in each case terminate a transmission section formed of operating links and/or protection links, and between which information is exchanged over the transmission section, wherein

in the case of a fault on the relevant transmission section, the information transmitted over the section is diverted to the protection link in accordance with the determination of priority criteria and logical connection information,

the information is linked into MPLS packets, such that two oppositely directed unidirectional MPLS connections are logically associated with one another, the two oppositely directed MPLS connections in each case connecting the same switching devices,

a number of linear transmission sections are joined together so that a ring line system is formed, wherein operating protection links are conducted via different physical paths, and

a multiplicity of protection links share a jointly reserved transmission capacity, and  
a unidirectional ring line system is formed by using unidirectional switching devices, and the logical association of the two oppositely directed unidirectional MPLS connections is retained.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein in the protection switching case, a protection switching request is generated to which other priorities are assigned.

4. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the logical connection information is the MPLS connection number.

5. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein local and global priority tables are provided in which the order of rank of the priorities is specified.

6. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein when a protection switching request arrives in the receiving switching device, a protection switching protocol is generated which is supplied once to the transmitting switching device via the protection link.
7. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a total failure and degradation of an operating link are determined in the monitoring device of the receiving switching device.
8. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the switching devices are constructed as MPLS cross-connect switching systems.
9. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection switching is effected by driving a switching device included in the transmitting switching device and by using a selection device arranged in the receiving switching device.
10. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein special data are transmitted via the protection link at times free of operating disturbances.
11. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the special data are arranged as low-priority traffic which are automatically displaced from the low-priority traffic in the case of protection switching of the high-priority traffic.
12. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the selection device is constructed as a switching network and/or as a simple switching element.
13. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the protection switching protocol is exchanged cyclically between the transmitting switching device and the receiving switching device.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:~~

A method for protection switching of transmission devices, comprising:

at least two switching devices which in each case terminate a transmission section formed of operating links and/or protection links, and between which information is exchanged over the transmission section, wherein

in the case of a fault on the relevant transmission section, the information transmitted over the section is diverted to the protection link in accordance with the determination of priority criteria and logical connection information,

the information is linked into MPLS packets, such that two oppositely directed unidirectional MPLS connections are logically associated with one another, the two oppositely directed MPLS connections in each case connecting the same switching devices,

a number of linear transmission sections are joined together so that a ring line system is formed, wherein operating protection links are conducted via different physical paths, and

a multiplicity of protection links share a jointly reserved transmission capacity; and

group protection switching provided in the MPLS connections conducted via the same physical path are logically combined to form a group, and for the group formed at least two protection switching connections are generated, in each case one of the protection switching connections being set up via an operating link and another one of the protection switching connections being set up via the protection link.

15. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein in the case where group protection switching is provided, the monitoring devices monitor the at least two protection switching connections.

16. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed claim 1, wherein the connections conducted via the at least one operating link and the connections conducted via the protection link are set up via an MPLS signaling protocol which also reserves bandwidth in the transmission devices and specifies the path of the operating link and of the protection link.